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SUBJECT: SALT: EXPERTS SESSION OF DECEMBER 15

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR FARLEY'S PRESENTATION TO NAC, GARTHOFF REMAINED FOR EXPERTS SESSION. DISCUSSION FOCUSSED PRIMARILY ON FBS ISSUES, ON NATURE AND SCOPE OF POSSIBLE NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION AND ON TIMING AND TACTICS OF ANY US OFFER TO CONSIDER SUCH A PROVISION. END SUMMARY.

2. ITALIAN REP (PETRIGNANI) OPENED SESSION BY ASKING STRATEGIC VALUE ASCRIBED BY THE SOVIET SIDE ON US FBS. GARTHOFF SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIET EMPHASIS ON FBS IS BASED ON A GENUINE CONCERN OVER THEIR STRATEGIC POTENTIAL AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIETS FIND IT CONVENIENT TO CONCENTRATE ON FBS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. FBS HAVE NOT IN THE PRE-SALT PAST BEEN CONSIDERED A SEPARATE WEAPONS CATEGORY, BUT RATHER AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GENERAL ARRAY OF US FORCES FOR DETERRENCE AND ALLIANCE SUPPORT. ALTHOUGH SOME DIFFERENCE EXISTS, EVEN BY SOVIET DEFINITION, BETWEEN STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL FORCE ELEMENTS, IN SALT THE SOVIETS HAVE SINGLED OUT A CATEGORY OF WEAPONS WHICH HAS THE CAPABILITY BOTH FOR FIELD THEATRE NUCLEAR SUPPORT AND FOR STRATEGIC USE.

3. WHILE ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF US FORWARD-BASED AIRCRAFT (FBA)

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ACTUALLY HAVE ANY MISSION AGAINST THE USSR ITSELF, LOOKED AT FROM THE SOVIET VIEWPOINT FBS FORCES COULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE STRATEGIC POTENTIAL. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE US DOES NOT CONCEDE THIS POINT, BUT IT CANNOT BE COMPLETELY DISMISSED. US FBA COULD, IF SO USED, ATTACK AND DESTROY A CONSIDERABLE PROPORTION OF THE SOVIET POPULATION, INDUSTRY AND/OR STRATEGIC FORCES. IN COMPUTER ANALYSIS, WE ESTIMATE OUR FBA, EVEN WITH 50 PERCENT ATTRITION, COULD DESTROY EITHER 25 PER CENT OF THE SOVIET POPULATION, OR 90 PERCENT OF ITS MR/IRBM FORCE, OR 20 PERCENT OF ITS COMBINED MR/I/IR/ICBM FORCE. ALTHOUGH US FBA ARE NOT ACTUALLY TARGETED IN THIS MANNER, SOVIET MILITARY PLANNERS UNDOUBTEDLY ARE MORE LIKELY TO STRESS CAPABILITIES THAN INTENTIONS. IF SOVIET CONCERN OVER FBS WERE ONLY POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, THE ISSUE MIGHT EVENTUALLY DROP OUT OF SALT. BUT GIVEN SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF FBS STRATEGIC POTENTIAL, THESE SYSTEMS ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. ITALIAN REP THEN ASKED WHETHER SOVIET SIDE HAD MADE ANY SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO US 6TH FLEET. CARTHOFF SAID 6TH FLEET HAD NOT BEEN SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED, EITHER IN SALT ONE OR AT GENEVA. HOWEVER, SOVIET PROPOSALS IN SALT ONE TO WITHDRAW ALL AIRCRAFT CARRIERS OUT OF RANGE OF THE OTHER SIDE WOULD HAVE AFFECTED 6TH FLEET DEPLOYMENTS. AT SALT TWO, SOVIETS HAVE GONE BEYOND THEIR EARLIER POSITION BY INSISTING THAT ATTACK CARRIERS, AND ALL ATTACK AIRCRAFT THEREON, BE CONSIDERED AS STRATEGIC NO MATTER WHERE DEPLOYED. THE CURRENT SOVIET FORMULATION ALSO DIFFERS FROM THEIR SALT ONE POSITION IN ITS REFERENCE TO "ATTACK" CARRIERS AND "ATTACK" AIRCRAFT. WE SUSPECT SOVIETS HAVE USED THIS MORE PRECISE TERMINOLOGY SO AS TO EXCLUDE THEIR OWN ASW HELICOPTER CARRIERS FROM THESE LIMITS:

5. CANADIAN REP ASKED WHETHER US, IN REJECTING SOVIET DEFINITION OF STRATEGIC, HAD ATTEMPTED TO FORMULATE ITS OWN DEFINITION. GARTHOFF SAID THE US HAD NOT PUT FORWARD ANY DEFINITION. WE HAVE SPOKEN OF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE AND OF FORCES RELEVANT TO IT. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY USED THE TERM "CENTRAL STRATEGIC SYSTEMS", WHICH WE HOLD TO INCLUDE ICBMS, SLBMS AND HEAVY BOMBERS, AND THE TERM "NON-CENTRAL SYSTEMS", WHICH IS MEANT TO ENCOMPASS VARIOUS SOVIET SYSTEMS AS WELL AS FBS.

6. FRENCH REP ASKED WHETHER THOSE TACTICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGES WHICH ALLOWED THE US TO ACCEPT NUMERICAL DISPARITY IN THE INTERIM AGREEMENT (IA) WILL HAVE DISAPPEARED BY THE TIME

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A PERMANENT AGREEMENT BASED ON EQUAL AGGREGATES EMERGES. GARTHOFF STRESSED THE US HELD A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE IA. WHILE WE TOOK INTO ACCOUNT OUR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGES IN AGREEING TO THE IA, US DEL NEVER ADVANCED THIS RATIONALE TO THE OTHER SIDE AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR DIFFERENCE IN NUMBERS IN ICBMS AND SLBMS. WE ACCEPTED A NUMERICAL DISPARITY BECAUSE WE BELIEVED IT IN OUR INTEREST FOR INTERIM PERIOD TO FREEZE ON-GOING SOVIET PROGRAMS WHILE US OFFENSIVE PROGRAMS WERE IN NO WAY CURTAILED. WE HAVE NEVER CONCEDED THAT DIFFERENCES IN LAUNCHER NUMBERS ARE MEANT TO COMPENSATE FOR DIFFERENCES IN TECHNOLOGY OR GEOGRAPHY.

7. THE US CALCULATED THAT FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD OF THE IA WE COULD NOT BE DISADVANTAGED EVEN BY BETTER-THAN-EXPECTED SOVIET TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES. WE ARE AWARE THAT OUR QUALITATIVE EDGE, SUCH AS IN MIRVS, IS NOT LIKELY TO LAST INDEFINATELY AND THAT WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF HEAVY ICBMS THE SOVIETS COULD EVENTUALLY DEPLOY MORE MIRV THAN THE US. THIS HAD LED TO OUR EMPHASIS IN-SALT TWO ON THROW-WEIGHT. WE ARE PROPOSING, IN EFFECT TO FORESTALL ANY INCREASE IN PUTATIVE SOVIET ADVANTAGES BY MOVING INTO A TREATY WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR EQUAL NUMBERS AND EQUAL THROW-WEIGHT. WERE THE SOVIETS TO CONVERT THEIR SS-7S AND SS-8S INTO SLBMS AS PERMITTED UNDER THE IA, AND ELIMINATE THEIR SS-9 FORCE, WE WOULD HAVE EQUAL LEVELS IN BOTH ICBM NUMBERS AND THROW-WEIGHT. FROM THE SOVIET STANDPOINT, WE MAY SEEM TO BE SUGGESTING THEY DISCARD THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THEIR STRATEGIC FORCE. BUT WE BELIEVE OUR POSITION IS APPROPRIATE IN TERMS OF VISIBLE INDICES OF EQUALITY AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIC STABILITY.

8. FRENCH REP ALSO ASKED WHETHER US DESIRE TO ACHIEVE PARITY IN CENTRAL SYSTEMS WOULD NOT OBLIGE SOVIET SIDE TO ATTACH MORE IMPORTANCE TO FBS. GARTHOFF THOUGHT THAT WITH REDUCTIONS, SOVIETS MAY FEEL THAT THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FBS INCREASES, BUT US INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO PLACE EMPHASIS ON THE CENTRAL STRATEGIC SYSTEMS.

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9. BELGIAN REP (WILLOT) SAID HIS GOVERNMENT FAVORED AN EXPLICIT NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION TO ANY TACIT OR IMPLIED COMMITMENT. LATTER WOULD INTORDUCE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION, AND WILLOT POINTED TO THE RECENT SOVIET PROPOSALS ON STRATEGIC AVIATION AS AN EXAMPLE. THE SOVIET DEFINITION WAS SO VAGUE AS TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER US OR ALLIED TACTICAL AIRCRAFT WERE PERMITTED TO GO NUCLEAR. WILLOT AGREED FBS ISSUE COULD NOT BE AVOIDED, AND THAT A NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION SHOULD BE PRECISE, ALONG THE LINES OF "FLEXIBLE CEILINGS AT CLOSE TO CURRENT LEVELS". WILLOT'S SECOND POINT RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF TACTICAL TIMING. HE WONDERED AT WHAT POINT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THE US WOULD INDICATE TO THE SOVIETS THAT IT WAS WILLING TO DEAL WITH FBS AND NON-TRANSFER IN TERMS OF A NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION. WILLOT'S FINAL QUESTION PERTAINED TO THE CURRENT US POSITION ON LAND-BASED MOBILE ICBMS, WHICH, HE NOTED, HAD BEEN OMITTED FROM THE SERIES OF BANS ON LESSER STRATEGIC SYSTEMS PROPOSED BY THE SOVIETS. HE ASKED IF ALLOWED MIBILE ICBMS COULD BE VERIFIED.

10. REGARDING WILLOT'S COMMENTS ON A NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION, GARTHOFF REMARKED THAT PROS AND CONS EXISTED ON BEHALF OF BOTH A VAGUE AND A SPECIFIC NON-CIRCUMVENTION FORMULA. BUT IN EITHER CASE, THERE WAS A CLEAR ADVANTAGE IN PLACING THE BURDEN UPON THE COMPLAINANT. AS FOR THE TACTICAL MOMENT TO SIGNAL FOR OUR WILLINGNESS TO LOOK AT A NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION, GARTHOFF SAID THE US HAS TAKEN NO DECISION YET AND THE ENTIRE QUESTION WILL REQUIRE SERIOUS STUDY AND CONSULTATION. ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO SIGNAL

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THIS READINESS RELATIVELY EARLY, BUT DECLINE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE IN DETAIL UNTIL MAIN LINES OF LIMITATIONS IN CENTRAL SYSTEMS AGREED. IN REPLY TO WILLOT'S QUESTION ON LAND-BASED MOBILE ICBMS, GARTHOFF OBSERVED THAT NEITHER SIDE HAD RAISED THE ISSUE IN GENEVE, ALTHOUGH THE US WAS PREPARED TO SPEAK ON IT. WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IT IS FAR EARLIER TO VERIFY A BAN ON MOBILE ICBMS THAN IT WOULD BE TO VERIFY A GIVEN NUMBER OF MOBILES. HOWEVER, EVEN A GIVEN NUMBER PROBABLY COULD BE VERIFIED WITHIN AN ACCEPTABLE RANGE SINCE LAND-MOBILES ARE LESS ACCURATE AND HAVE LESS THROW-WEIGHT THAN SILO-LAUNCHED MISSILES. IN GENERAL, THE US FAVORS A COMPLETE BAN ON SUCH SYSTEMS, AND WILL RAISE THE QUESTION OF MOBILES AT SOME POINT IN SALT TWO.

11. FRG REP (MENNE) ASKED FOR A DEFINITION OF THROW-WEIGHT, AND FOR SOME INDICATION OF THE CONTENT OF THE WORK PROGRAM. GARTHOFF DEFINED THROW-WEIGHT AS THE MAXIMUM WEIGHT WHICH CAN BE THROWN BY AN ICBM WITH ITS MAIN MOTORS TO A NOMINAL (10,000 KMS DISTANCE). THIS WEIGHT INCLUDES THE NOSE CONE, SHROUD, WARHEAD, PENALDS AND ANY DISPENSING MECHANISMS FOR THE PENALDS OR WARHEADS. IN SHORT, EVERYTHING BEYOND THE BASIC PROPULSION STAGES OF THE MISSILES. ON THE WORK PROGRAM, GARTHOFF MENTIONED THAT BOTH SIDES HAD FOUND SUCH A DOCUMENT MODERATELY USEFUL IN SALT ONE. IT WAS NOT AN AGENDA, SINCE IT DID NOT PREDICATE THE ORDER OF DISCUSSION, BUT RATHER A COMMON CHECK-LIST OF TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED. THE CURRENT PROGRAM OF WORK PROVIDES FOR DISCUSSION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS TO BE INCLUDED IN A MORE COMPLETE AGREEMENT, OF THE MODES OF LIMITATIONS ON THESE ARMS, AND OF OTHER MEASURES RELATED TO AN AGREEMENT ON MORE COMPLETE OFFENSIVE LIMITATIONS.

12. MENNE THEN REMARKED THAT IF BOTH SALT PARTIES SOUGHT TO REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF THOSE SYSTEMS WHICH THEY PERCEIVED AS MOST THREATENING, THE SOVIETS WOULD CERTAINLY WANT TO INCLUDE STRATEGIC BOMBERS AND FBS ON THEIR BALANCE SHEET. AS FBS ARE OF A SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT NATURE THAN CENTRAL STRATEGIC SYSTEMS, MENNE WONDERED HOW THE US WOULD RECONCILE THE PRINCIPLE OF STRATEGIC PARITY WITH THE GOAL OF EQUAL AGGREGATES. GARTHOFF EMPHASIZED THAT THE US CONCEPT IS TO ESTABLISH EQUAL AGGREGATES BY LINKING HEAVY BOMBERS TO ICBMS AND SLBMS AND USING THE EXISTING BOMBER DIFFERENTIAL IN OUR FAVOR LARGELY TO BALANCE THE SOVIET ADVANTAGE IN ICBMS AND SLBMS. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS

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WILL NO DOUBT SEEK TO BRING FBS INTO THIS EQUATION, THE US WILL RESIST ALL SUCH EFFORTS AND INSIST THAT FBS ARE RELEVANT ONLY IN RELATION TO SOVIET NON-CENTRAL SYSTEMS. MENNE'S FINAL POINT WAS A PROPOSAL TO SCHEDULE THE NEXT EXPERTS SESSION TO PRECEDE THE COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED NEXT JANUARY TO ADDRESS SYG SUMMARY PAPER (SEE USNATO 5423, REPORT ON COUNCIL MEETING). THIS WOULD ENABLE THE PERMREPS TO COMMENT MORE FULLY ON THE TOPICS UNDER DISCUSSION. GARTHOFF SAID HE HAD NO COMMENT ON THIS PROPOSAL, BUT WISHED TO POINT OUT THAT JANUARY WOULD FIND THE US IN THE MIDST OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT SALT ROUND AND IT WAS UNLIKELY THE US WOULD BE ABLE TO INTRODUCE ANY NEW ELEMENTS INTO THE DISCUSSION AT THAT TIME. HOWEVER, A JANUARY MEETING COULD PROVIDE WASHINGTON WITH SOME USEFUL INPUT FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

13. BRITISH REP (ROSE) SAID THE UK HOPED OF COURSE FBS COULD BE DISPOSED OF WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT, BUT ASSUMING THIS NOT POSSIBLE SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES OF A NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. UK, HOWEVER, HOPED TO AVOID ANYTHING MORE SPECIFIC THAN A GENERALIZED NON-CIRCUMVENTION CLAUSE. AT THIS POINT, ROSE QUESTIONED WILLOT ABOUT THE PRECISE MEANING OF HIS EARLIER STATEMENT ON "FLEXIBLE CEILING AT CLOSE TO CURRENT LEVELS". WILLOT EXPLAINED HE HAD NOT MEANT A SPECIFIED CEILING, BUT MERELY A GENERAL COMMITMENT NOT TO EXCEED CURRENT LEVELS.

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14. ROSE THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF TIMING ON FBS. THE SOVIETS HAVE STAKED OUT AN EXTREME POSITION, AND THE US REBUTTAL WILL COME AT THE END OF THIS SALT SESSION. THUS, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SOVIETS WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND UNTIL NEXT FEBRUARY OR MARCH. AT SOME POINT, PRESUMABLY EARLY IN THE NEXT ROUND, THE US DELEGATION WILL PUT FORWARD MORE DETAILS ON ITS POSITION AND REVEAL ITS DESIRE TO ELIMINATE SS-9S. THIS WOULD PUT TWO EXTREME POSITIONS ON THE TABLE AND THE TIMING OF ANY US PROPOSAL ON GBS WOULD BE CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT. ROSE SAID THE UK HOPED THAT WHEN THIS POINT IS REACHED, CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WILL BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL.

15. GARTHOFF POINTED OUT THAT A NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROPOSAL SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS A US ACCEPTANCE TO THE SOVIET VIEW ON FBS, BUT RATHER AS A COUNTER-PROPOSAL DEALING NOT WITH FBS ALONE BUT THE NON-CENTRAL SYSTEMS PROBLEM. A NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROVISION WOULD NOT RAISE THE QUESTION OF REDUCTIONS, WOULD DEAL EQUITABLY WITH NON-CENTRAL SYSTEMS ON BOTH SIDES, AND WOULD MAKE EXPLICIT SOMETHING OTHER WISE TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT THE TREATY ITSELF WILL NOT BE UNDERCUT. ON THIS LAST POINT THE SOVIETS AT PRESENT CAN ARGUE AGAINST A CENTRAL SYSTEM AGGREGATE BY CLAIMING THAT US CAN SURROUND THE USSR WITH INTERMEDIATE RANGE WEAPONS. READINESS TO AGREE ON A NON-CIRCUMVENTION CLAUSE WOULD REMOVE THIS ARGUMENT. AS FOR ROSE'S SECOND POINT REGARDING EVENTUAL SOVIET REACTION TO THE EXTREME US POSITION, GARTHOFF SAID THE SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY SENSED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE US PROPOSALS. THIS COULD, INDEED, BRING US TO THE IMPASSE

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DESCRIBED BY THE UK REP, WHERE THE SOVIETS MIGHT REFUSE TO DISCUSS THROW-WEIGHT OF EQUAL AGGREGATES AS LONG AS THE US WAS NOT WILLING TO DISCUSS FBS.

16. DUTCH REP REQUESTED CLARIFICATION OF US EQUAL AGGREGATES/ EQUAL THRO-WEIGHT PROPOSAL. DID EQUAL AGGREGATES APPLY TO EACH OF THE THREE CENTRAL SYSTEMS AND DID EQUAL THROW-WEIGHT APPLY TO BOMBERS AS WELL AS BALLISTIC MISSILES? GARTHOFF EXPLAINED THAT EQUAL AGGREGATES REFERRED TO THE COMBINED TOTAL OF THE THREE CENTRAL SYSTEMS WITH, HOWEVER, EQUAL SUB-LIMIT ON ICBM LAUNCHERS. THROW-WEIGHT LIMITATIONS APPLIED ONLY TO ICBMS AND NOT TO THE OVERALL AGGREGATE. GARTHOFF ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE US CONSIDERS ANY AGREED AGGREGATE LEVEL SHOULD BE ATTAINED BY REDUCTIONS AND NOT INCREASES IN FORCE LEVELS.

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